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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2148
INFO RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5691
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2303
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001192

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2017

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SUBJECT: MFA U/S APAKAN ON TURKEY'S ESDP COMPLAINTS,
COMMENTS FROM OTHER ALLIES

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: MFA U/S Ertugrul Apakan told Ambassador on May 15 that Turkey's complaints about its role within the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) have not been resolved, but stated that Turkey was committed to a positive transition in Kosovo. Ambassador urged a rapid resolution of the impasse and emphasized the importance of success in Kosovo to NATO and the US. The British have told us that they are sending a team headed by their NATO PermRep to Ankara May 29-30 to discuss the problem. It appears that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) is driving Turkey's hard-line position on the issue and one of the key causes is Cyprus and the GOC block on Turkey's entry into the European Defense Agency (EDA). End summary

12. (C) Ambassador raised concerns about ESDP and NATO-EU relations in the context of Kosovo and the delivery of key points on the UNSC process (septel). He noted discussions among NATO CHODs May 9 and a PermRep's informal on May 10. We regard Kosovo as an urgent issue and want to see technical arrangements, including the Transition Directive, finalized soon and before a UNSC vote in coming weeks. While there is sympathy for the EU issues that Turkey has raised, these should not hold up urgent Kosovo work now. The picture of a balking Turkey at NATO -- especially given internal developments here -- will look awful, and therefore Turkey should work with others to find some fix, at least for now.

13. (C) No progress has been made on Turkey's complaints about its role in the ESDP, Apakan told Ambassador. At NATO, the approach taken by the Military Committee was far from sympathetic in the Turks' view. The US is in a position to see the problem from both sides, he said. NATO DDG Serdar Kilic offered that although the issue is complex, the solution could be simple. Turkey had proposed that the Transitional Directive on Kosovo be "sanitized" of any reference to NATO-EU relations and include only details of the NATO-UN operating framework. Thus discrepancies would be eliminated, according to Kilic. The NATO SYG could do this quickly if there was political will.

14. (C) Technical NATO-EU arrangements are a deeper issue, Kilic noted. Here, Turkey rejects the excuse that these cannot be discussed in political fora because they are too technical. The issue has an important political dimension and requires a political decision. NATO's rule of consensus cannot be eroded, Kilic emphasized. With 450 troops in Kosovo (a figure soon to rise to 700, Apakan said), Turkey has an important stake in the outcome and wants the transition to succeed. Ambassador encouraged Apakan to make

productive use of sympathy for its complaints, urged a rapid resolution, and underscored the high priority the US and NATO attach to success of the Kosovo transition.

¶5. (C) Separately, the British told us that they are sending a team Ankara May 29-30 to discuss the issue. The British team will be headed by NATO PermRep Stewart Eldon and will include UK Military Representative to NATO and the EU Vice Admiral Anthony Dymock, Political and Security Ambassador Julian King, and NATO Defense Counselor Paul Flaherty. The British say they are sympathetic to at least some of the Turkish ESDP complaints and are working on ways to address them, but resent GOT tactics at NATO which they term "blackmail." It is their sense that TGS is behind the hard-line position that Ankara has taken at NATO. We see the same from contacts at the staff level at TGS, where frustration about sympathy but inattention to Turkey's Cyprus-related EU concerns is high.

¶6. (C) Italians tell us they are also somewhat sympathetic to Turkish ESDP complaints, but are concerned that Turkish actions will handicap the EU mission in Kosovo, could effect future EU operations in Afghanistan, and cause wider negative reverberations in EU-NATO collaboration.

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